



Part 26: Blessed are the Peacemakers

Matthew 5:9

Congratulations! Joyful are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

I. Aching for Peace in a Conflictual World

We live in a world that aches for peace from everything to warring nations to our cultural divide over rival political & social visions of flourishing to personal conflicts in families (spouses/parents v children) ... the church is no exception ... studies show Christians are more divided than ever ...

Into this ache, Jesus says ...

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In our series on Matthew looking specifically at the Beatitudes ...

Jesus is both announcing good news to the socially powerless, and he is expressing a Way of living that embodies the Kingdom.

Congratulations! Be joyful! The grace of the King rests upon you, and you belong to Him forever. You, who least expected it, are now in the beautiful Kingdom, and your life is forever changed.

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Look at three questions:

- What is Biblical peace?
- Who or what is the source of peace?

- What does it mean to live as peacemakers?

II. Biblical Peace

The theme of “peace” permeates the entire Bible (Hebrew *shalom*; Greek *eirene*). Most people think of peace as either inner tranquility (think of our modern industry around mindfulness) or the outward state of the absence of relational conflict or war.

The Hebrew concept of *shalom* includes these dimensions, but it is much broader meaning well-being or wholeness. Dale Bruner defines Biblical peace as “comprehensive welfare.”

Shalom is life as God originally intended it to be: a well-rounded, holistic existence. Shalom involves harmony with the earth, harmony with other human beings, harmony with the inner self, and harmony with the Living God. ... Shalom encompasses every dimension of life – the economic and political as well as the personal and religious. Darrell Johnson

In the New Testament, we learn that Jesus is the author of peace between God and people as well as between hostile people like Jews & Gentiles (Colossians 1:20; Ephesians 2:13). Therefore, Biblical peace always involves reconciliation (more later).

III. The Ultimate Source of Peace

Jesus came announcing the good news of the arrival of God’s Kingdom on earth as it is in Heaven.

The writers of the four Gospels were making a point by the Greek word they used for good news/gospel (*euangelion*). This was the word used by the Roman Emperor to announce themselves as the Saviors of the world and the ones who bring peace.

An inscription describing the birthday of Caesar Augustus reads...

“...a Savior, who has made wars cease and who shall put everything in peaceful order ... the birthday of our God signaled the beginning of the gospel (euangelion) for the world because of him....”

The four Gospel writers are declaring that the ultimate Source of peace is not any man or government, but God Himself.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6

*“Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to me on whom his favor rests.’”
Luke 2:13-14*

“For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things ... by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.” Colossians 1:19-20

Those who respond to King Jesus receive peace with God and the empowering grace to live as peacemakers. They are called to embody the grace of their King and the character of their Heavenly Father, showing themselves to be His children.

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IV. Living as Peacemakers

See Peacemaker Ministries – “The Slippery Slope” diagram (and available brochures).

Biblical peacemaking is not the same as “peacekeeping,” which is often the avoidance of conflict at the expense of true peace. It is not the same as “peace-loving” or “peace-wanting” that too often remain passive.

“Peacemaking is neither being ‘nice’, nor is it ‘tolerance’; rather, it is an active entrance into the middle of warring parties for the purpose of creating reconciliation and peace...The peacemaker, as the person whom Jesus blesses, seeks to reconcile – not by pretending there are no differences or by suppressing differences, but by creating love of the other that transcends differences or permits the people to join in spite of differences.” – Scott McKnight

“Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.” Psalm 34:14

Biblical peacemaking will often require that we speak and stand against evil in the name of peace. This helps understand Jesus’ ministry, which was often conflictual (Matthew 10:34-36).

V. A Costly Peace.

The peace of God is not a peace at any price. God made peace with us at the immense cost of the death of His Son (Romans 5:1-12; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Ephesians 2:14-18).

“The cross is not only the ground of our salvation, but it is also the shape of our salvation. The cross is not only the source of our new life in Christ, but it is also the pattern of our new life in Christ.” – Darrell Johnson

Sometimes we will pay a cost for our attempts to be peacemakers. Sometimes we will receive the scorn and opposition of people (see Matthew 5:10-12).

But peacemakers receive God’s approval and blessing.

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